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Mexico, Central America discuss war on drugs

SAN JOSE (AFP) - Leaders of Mexico and Central America on Wednesday opened a summit focused on trade and the relentless violence sweeping the region from the US-backed war on drug trafficking.

The United States says 90 percent of the cocaine shipped from South America passes through Mexico and Central America.

In Mexico alone some 70,000 people have died in drug-related violence since the government deployed the military to fight drug cartels.

"We need a regional perspective to overcome the social ravages that our countries face" said Mexico's new President Enrique Pena Nieto. "We need a close dialogue to strengthen peace."

Central America in the 1980s was ravaged by civil wars, and now finds itself again awash in blood as its serves as a gateway to the north, with penetration from Mexican cartels and grinding

poverty that makes lucrative drug trafficking hard to resist.

The violence has mainly affected an area known as the Northern Triangle consisting of Honduras, likened to one big airport for secret drug flights; Guatemala, penetrated by the most blood-thirsty of the cartels, Los Zetas; and El Salvador, which is enjoying a respite after a truce among street gangs.

The summit here in the capital of Costa Rica was attended by Nieto, Guatemalan President Otto Perez, President Porfirio Diaz of Honduras and Panama's President Ricardo Martinelli.

Daniel Ortega of Nicaragua and El Salvador's President Mauricio Funi said they could not attend, but they sent representatives to the meeting.

Trade between Mexico and its smaller neighbors to the south has already quintupled over the past decade to \$8.2 billion, according to the Mexican finance ministry.

Inscription open for the 2nd Annual Ms. Canada Beach Volleyball fundraising event



Michelle Begin with raffle ticket

Michelle Begin of Canada has been spending around 5 weeks annually wintering on Aruba for well over 20 years. She is the sort of person who cares for the less fortunate and needs to feel involved with her community, particularly on Aruba, her favorite place in the world. Her desire to "give back" to the island where she has made so many dear friends, resulted in her organizing her first fundraising volleyball tournament last year, which was hugely successful.

The vivacious lady who has earned the nickname of "Ms. Canada," among her island friends is putting together a second tournament, with even better raffle prizes and more interesting perks for participating teams and spectators.

This fun event, dedicated to raising funds for a number of local charities, will take place on Sunday, March 3 on the beachfront in front of La Cabana/Tropicana Resort. Groups that wish to compete can sign up in the offices of the tennis club located in the parking lot between the two resorts.

This year, funds and donations from sponsors have been earmarked to purchase desperately needed kitchen equipment for Ambiente

Feliz, a full time home for the mentally challenged. Last year, they were awarded with plants and gardening equipment that within one year turned the facility's bare surroundings into a lush environment of flowers and vegetables.

Designated to again receive much needed supplies is Casa Cuna Progreso, a home for young children from disrupted families that require full time care. Michelle has also included in her list of recipients from the proceeds of this fundraiser uniforms for local girl's softball teams and scholarships for talented young athletes who can't afford quality tennis training.

Principal sponsors for a



Raffle tickets from Diamante and Queen's Jewelers

second year are Tropical Bottling/Balashi Brewery and Portfolio Printing in Sun Plaza. Generously donating prizes for the fundraising raffle are Diamante and Queen's Jewelers from Oranjestad with some exquisite pieces.

Michelle has also personally contributed a beautiful necklace, bracelet and earring ensemble of freshwater pearls. Renaissance Resort has provided a weekend stay at their resort and a full week at the Tropicana Resort & Casino will also be raffled.

Games start at 9 a.m. in the morning and the raffle drawing will be conducted at 5 p.m.

Continued on pg 5



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Foundation "Bon Nochi Drumi Dushi" starts reading competition

Deadline for all primary schools to submit kick-off assignment is February 22nd



This week, Foundation Bon Nochi Drumi Dushi and Marriott Vacation Club Aruba are starting off a new reading competition for students (grade 5, 6 and 7) of all primary schools in Aruba. The competition, called Ban Orlando Lesando (Let's go to Orlando reading) is comprised of a kick-off first assignment and a registration deadline of February 22nd. The first assignment and final school registration will be followed by two more rounds each with an assignment to read a different book and ending with fun quizzes on March 22nd and May 3rd. The winner of the final round receives a week's stay and roundtrip for two to Orlando, Florida, sponsored by Marriott Vacation Club Aruba.

The competition is open to all primary schools in Aruba and those schools that have not signed up yet can still do so, by 4 pm on Friday February 22nd, by sending an e-mail to bonnochidrumidushi@gmail.com.

Congratulations to the six-

teen primary schools that have already confirmed their participation. They are Pius X School, Colegio Sagrado Curason, Colegio Felipe B. Tromp, O.L.V. Fatima Colege, Caiqueto, Emmaschool, Scol Preparatorio Kudawecha, Colegio Laura Wernet Paskel, Colegio San Hose, Colegio Conrado Coronel, Colegio Hilario Angela, St. Fransiscus, Colegio Bon Bini, Maria School, Maria Regina School and St. Michael.

"We are happy that sixteen schools confirmed with us so far and want to emphasize that there is still time for additional schools to register and submit their first assignment in this island wide competition", said Olga Buckley, president of the Foundation. "It gives us great pride and joy to notice that children enjoy the experience of reading. For other schools that might still be interested, I'd like to emphasize that the deadline to submit student assignments is Friday February 22nd. All schools need to adhere to this deadline in order to participate in the competition and we are looking forward to the next round of this important reading competition."

First round requirements:

Schools who have yet to enroll, but have students participating in the first round have to read the book Catal-

ino Bocachica by the author Luis Dario Bernal Pinilla. After reading, students have to write their own ending to this book, which forms the kick-off assignment to participate in the competition. The new ending to the book should not exceed a half letterhead size document in font Times Roman or Arial, size 12 pt. Deadline for this assignment is Friday February 22 and all entries can be submitted to bonnochidrumidushi@gmail.com.

On Friday February 22 Bon Nochi Drumi Dushi is organizing a general meeting for all participating schools, students, parents and teachers to give further information about the reading competition and the next two rounds. The meeting will start at 4 pm in the Foundations' office located at Oranjestraat 28 in Oranjestad.

Bon Nochi Drumi Dushi was founded in 2007 to promote, support and stimulate reading books amongst children, both at school and at home. The Foundation's focus group are young school students aged 4 to 8. Activities of the Foundation include book reading sessions and house visits, reading quizzes for primary schools, promotions in conjunction with the National Library, the Bibliobus.

Marriott Vacation Club Aruba started supporting the Bon Nochi Drumi Dushi Foundation in 2012 strongly believing in the Foundation's goals and objectives and is a co-sponsor in the reading competition.

Holland interested in IMSAN developments



Min Visser with Rene Steenhorst

The government of Aruba has been promoting Aruba's special projects in the Netherlands. Just recently they met with prominent journalist Rene Steenhorst who showed great interest in many of the projects being undertaken here. Steenhorst's particular interest is in medical news. The topics of discussion with Steenhorst was related to Aruba as a Caribbean island serving as the pioneer of various aspects in the promotion of health. Some of the aspects in which Aruba excels is the health walks, Ciclovía, Health Schools project, the Hospital and IMSAM projects.

Rene Steenhorst is very interested in visiting Aruba to witness the conversion of

IMSAN into an Oncological Center. Steenhorst is aware of the fact that Aruba has had conversations with Dutch Professor Bob Pinedo, who is a key personality in Holland on Cancer management. The idea of Aruba developing Medical Tourism and its connection with "Europe Meets The Americas" he considers excellent for commerce but especially for the field of medicine.

Rene Steenhorst follows medical developments in Holland, investigates and analyzes new projects. He has become well known for his investigative reports for the popular De Telegraaf.

He has written on a number of important health matters, such as: the importance of a healthy life style, the prevention of chronic diseases, the power of the mind, and how to prevent degeneration of the body and the nervous system.

Aruba is pleased with the interest from Steenhorst in the various positive developments taking place here in the medical field.

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Change in traffic! Concessielaan to be closed off for traffic as of Mon. Feb 25!



ORANJESTAD – The department of Public Works – DOW – announces to all motorists that as of **Monday, February 25, 2013**, the Concessielaan road that runs from the John G. Emanstraat until the Dominicanessenstraat

will be closed for three (3) weeks. The closure is for DOW to install a water drainage pipe under the road.

The road will be closed for all traffic from 7:00 a.m. until 4:00 p.m. for traffic from both sides.

There will be barricades and traffic signs to alert motorists.

DOW asks the motorists NOT to use this piece of road unless it is to go home or get to an office or business.

DOW asks for understanding and apologizes for any inconvenience this may cause.

Immigration Management System at DIMAS temporarily out of service

ORANJESTAD – DIMAS - The Department of Immigration Integration, Management and admission – informs that “NAVAS,” the foreigner registration and administration system, is temporarily out of service. The Department is taking all the necessary measures for the system to work again, but the diagnostic and reparation works are taking more time than predicted.

DIMAS announces to all its clients that its offices will remain open and that its per-

sonnel will receive applications for all its services, but manually.

Momentarily, the Help Desk cannot check the status of applications that are currently in progress due to the problems with the “NAVAS” system.

DIMAS ask all its clients for their patience and understanding for this uncommon situation and apologizes for any inconvenience this may cause.

Workshop “Designed 2 Shine” only for Women



which was a huge success.

The A.T.I.A. building was filled with enthusiastic participants taking advantage of an educative afternoon. The workshop started with a presentation of Giovanna Franken of “In Tune with Body and Mind.” Giovanna shared different tips on nutrition and detoxification.

Rodney Pieterella explained different fitness programs based on each women’s necessity individually. And to end this interesting evening Maggie’s send three representatives, Mayra Jacobs, Gabriela Panneflek and Joemys Hernandez who give a broad explanation regarding their known brands Shiseido and Lancome. They also did a diagnostic on the face to help women prevent skin problems in the future such as sun spots or acne problems.

All participants received gifts at the end of the evening and a fruit cocktail while socializing with each other.

A special thank you to FOCUS Aruba, Paseo Herencia Mall, ARZU Aruba and MAGGY’S Paseo Herencia for the beautiful gifts.

So ladies, keep pending for the next workshop, just for you ladies, by “Designed 2 Shine.”

Last Saturday A.T.I.A. and 2BFIT Studio organized a tremendous event for women, “Designed 2 Shine”



WE GET MAIL

After reading article on
Jenny Kock in
The Morning News...

So excited to read about Jenny Kock's career flourishing!! I bought 2 pastels from Jenny years

ago, one when he was still in occupational school & often wondered how he was doing. I will definitely look for him at the Bon Bini festival when I'm back in June or arrange to visit his studio.

Danki,

Margi Lynch



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Mark and Diane honored by ATA at the Marriott Ocean Club



Recently the Aruba Tourism Authority had the great pleasure of honoring a very nice couple whom are loyal and friendly visitors of Aruba at the Marriott Ocean Club as Distinguished Visitors.

The symbolic honorary title is presented in the name of the Minister of Tourism as a token of appreciation to guests who visit Aruba for 10 to 19 consecutive years.

The honorees were Mr. Mark and Mrs. Diane Elkins from New York NY. Mark and Diane love Aruba very much, because of the great and extremely friendly people, the great quality of the Marriott Ocean Club, the climate, beaches, restaurants and Aruba is paradise for them.

The certificate was presented by Mr. Ernest Giel representing the Aruba Tourism Authority together with Mrs. Gail Sahit and family members of the honorees.



Aruba Tourism
Authority

RBC celebrated Chinese New Year with Chinese corporate clients



Aruba's RBC Royal Bank held a special reception for their corporate Chinese clients to celebrate together with the Chinese community their Chinese New Year. The reception was held at the Grand Victoria Restaurant where their guests enjoyed a wonderful evening which included different presentations designed to benefit their businesses.

Pierre Rafini, Area Vice President Business Banking for RBC together with Felipe Werleman, Relationship Manager Business Banking for RBC, both gave speeches during the course of the evening. Raymond Dirksz spoke about the importance of Financial Reporting. Norman Henriquez and Wichard van der Meulen from Henriquez Croes & CO discussed the importance of Tax Compliance. Clifton Ling, former owner of the prestigious Ling & Sons Supermarket, shared some of his experiences and gave some valuable tips about how to manage a busi-



ness in a successful manner.

What all of the invited guests appreciated most about all the presentations is that everything was translated into Chinese, which made it all very understandable to everyone.

At the end of the evening each guest received a token

gift from RBC. They were all very pleased with the attention and reception to celebrate their New Year.

Accompanying photo shows management and employees of the Business Banking department of RBC Royal Bank (Aruba) N.V. together with invitees.

Inscription open for Beach Volleyball fundraising event

Continued from pg 1



Last year, a full roster of 24 teams provided an exciting day of beach volleyball action. There will be food and drink booths to further help raise funds.

Over \$4,500, was raised and Michelle hopes to "up the ante" this year. She will be stationed at various markets around Aruba through the week selling raffle tickets for \$20.

This Saturday, February 23, find her at Super Food supermarket with Aruba's Miss Teen Universe, offering raffle tickets. Each ticket includes a beautiful custom lapel pin of the Aruban and Canadian flags intertwined.

Those wishing to participate in the tournament can sign up Monday through Friday with Carlos in the pro shop of the tennis courts. Hours are from 7:30 a.m. until noon and from 4:00 until 10:00 p.m..

Mark your calendar for March 3, for a day of fun in the sun for a good cause, don't miss it.

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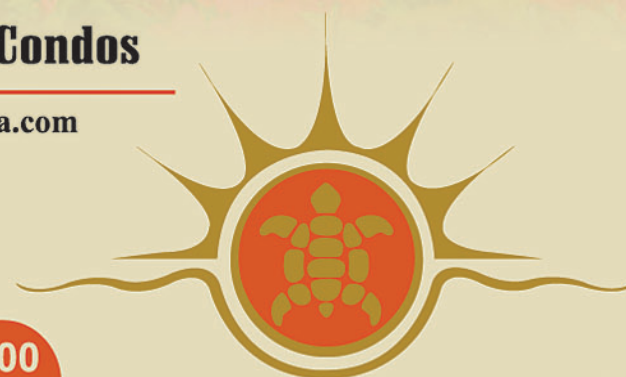
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"Aureus University to announces its 4th Health & Wellness Fair on Feb. 23rd



"Aureus University School of Medicine is pleased to announce that it will be holding

its fourth health fair on February 23rd from 8:00 am to 2:00 pm.

This event will be taking place at our new campus at Wayaca 31C (formerly

Brown's building). We are pleased to invite members from all of the surrounding communities to our campus on that day. Some of the reasons we have chosen to hold this Health Fair include:

- To increase health awareness and disease prevention for everyone by providing health screening tests, educational information, and

related activities.

- Increasing awareness of local and national health services and resources.

- Motivating participants to make positive health and behavior changes.

- Teach self-care practices.

It will be a delightful and educational experience for friends and family, organisers say.

Kerry warns against 'senseless' cuts to US diplomacy

CHARLOTTESVILLE, Virginia (AFP) - Secretary of State John Kerry warned Wednesday against "senseless" spending cuts to diplomacy, saying the United States needed robust engagement to remain an "exceptional" nation.

In his first speech since taking over as the top US diplomat, the former long-time senator focused on the latest fiscal showdown between the White House and Congress and the threat of massive automatic spending cuts on March 1.

Declaring that "deploying diplomats today is much cheaper than deploying troops tomorrow," Kerry said: "In many ways the greatest challenge to America's foreign policy today is in the hands not of diplomats, but of policymakers in Congress."

"My credibility as a diplomat working to help other countries create order is strongest when America at last puts its own fiscal house in order -- and that has to be

now," Kerry said at the University of Virginia.

"Think about it: It's hard to tell the leadership of any number of countries that they have to resolve their economic issues if we don't resolve our own," he said.

"Let's reach a responsible agreement that prevents these senseless cuts. Let's not lose this opportunity because of politics," he said.

Kerry delivered the speech four days before he heads off on his first foreign trip as secretary of state, visiting nine countries in Europe and the Middle East to reconnect with allies and discuss hotspots such as Syria.

Kerry, a former presidential candidate and the son of a diplomat, said that the United States had the ability to encourage stability around the world, preventing failed states that are "among our greatest security threats."

"America is not exceptional simply because we say we are. We are exceptional because we do exceptional things," Kerry said.

"We will continue to lead as the indispensable nation -- not because we seek this role, but because the world needs us to fill it... Not because we view it as a burden, but because we know it to be a privilege."

Kerry pointed to crises in Afghanistan, Pakistan and Mali as resulting from the international community losing interest. Kerry as a senator spearheaded a bill that authorized \$7.5 billion over five years in civilian aid to Pakistan.

Pointing out that foreign affairs counts for only one percent of federal spending, Kerry vowed to fight on behalf of US businesses but also to promote US "values" and assistance in everything from AIDS to human trafficking.

US unmoved by N. Korea's Obama in flames video

Washington (AFP) - The White House on Wednesday shrugged off North Korea's latest fiery propaganda coup, a video of US soldiers and President Barack Obama burning in the flames of a nuclear blast.

The video was the latest grab for global attention by Pyongyang, and apparently meant to further the argument that US aggression pushed North Korea into its latest nuclear test.

"Provocative propaganda is far less concerning to us and to our allies than provocative actions that violate North Korea's commitments to the United Nations and the international community," said Obama spokesman Jay Carney.

Carney also condemned North Korea's "flagrant violations of its commitments when it comes to its nuclear weapons program," just over a week after Pyongyang's latest defiant nuclear test on February 12.

The North Korean footage was uploaded on YouTube on Monday, two weeks after a separate video that showed New York city in flames after

an apparent missile attack.

Both videos were uploaded by the North's official website, Urimumzokkiri, which distributes news and propaganda from the state media.

The latest effort came with a series of Korean-language captions, arguing that North Korea had been forced into conducting its latest nuclear test -- on February 12 -- by US hostility.

"The North's high-level nuclear test aimed at US invaders, is the nuclear deterrent to safeguard our sovereignty," one caption read.

"The US practically guided the North towards conducting the nuclear test," it added.

The video showed images of Obama waving and preparing to deliver his State of the Union address -- all superimposed against a background of rising flames.

It ended with an animated sequence of a nuclear bomb being detonated in an underground bunker and the message: "The whole world is now watching. The US must answer now."

Merkel cautious on 'fracking' in Germany



BERLIN, Germany (AFP) - Chancellor Angela Merkel on Wednesday expressed caution over whether the revolutionary oil and gas technique of "fracking" could be introduced in Germany, saying public safety was the main concern.

The technology of "hydraulic fracturing", which has unlocked immense gas and oil resources and changed the geopolitics of energy, would "very probably also open up new gas deposits in Germany," Merkel told the Straubinger Tagblatt.

"Contrary to large parts of the United States, we are living here in a very densely populated country," Merkel told the regional daily in an interview.

The technology, also called "unconventional" production, remains highly controversial, with widespread, serious worries for the environment and the health of people living near the "fracking" locations.

It has been banned in France since 2011 but German Environment Minister



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Former US lawmaker Jackson Jr admits fraud

WASHINGTON (AFP) - Former US congressman Jesse Jackson Jr, the son of the well-known civil rights leader, pleaded guilty Wednesday to misusing \$750,000 in campaign funds, including by buying himself a gold Rolex watch.

The admission capped a stunning fall from grace for the Illinois Democrat who was once a rising national star but resigned under a

cloud in November after 17 years in the House of Representatives.

Prosecutors said Jackson used some of the siphoned funds to buy children's furniture, fur capes and a \$43,350 gold-plated Rolex watch.

His wife, former Chicago alderwoman Sandy Jackson, was expected to plead guilty to submitting false tax returns later Wednesday.

Jackson, 47, faces up to five years in prison on charges of conspiracy, making false statements, and mail and wire fraud, but his lawyer told reporters that he hoped for a lenient sentence.

"We're hopeful and we expect that there will be fairness in the process," defense attorney Reid Weingarten said on the steps of the Washington federal courthouse.

"A person who contributed so much to his community, done so much for so many people, will and should get credit for it."

Weingarten said Jackson's "serious health issues" -- which include bipolar disorder -- led to his reckless and criminal behavior, but that after "great treatment" Jackson has "gotten his arm around the problem."

"He has two small children and we're hopeful in short order or reasonably short order Jesse again will be a full-time wonderful caring devoted dad," Weingarten added.

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International News

Oil market dives on speculation over Saudi output hike

LONDON (AFP) - Global oil prices plunged on Wednesday as traders seized on speculation over possible plans for an increase in crude production and digested downbeat US housing starts data, analysts said.

Traders also took the opportunity to cash in recent gains as they awaited publication of minutes from the US Federal Reserve's latest monetary policy meeting.

In late afternoon London deals, Brent North Sea crude for delivery in April sank \$1.57 to \$115.95 a barrel.

New York's main contract, light sweet crude for March dived \$1.97 cents to \$94.69 per barrel. The March contract expires at the close.

Markets awaited the Fed's Federal Open Market Committee (FOMC) minutes for the January 29-30 meeting, due for release at 2:00 pm (1900 GMT).

Earlier on Wednesday, New York crude prices had risen on the back of easing supply concerns over an important US pipeline, analysts said.

US crude prices had advanced "on reports of increasing oil volume through the Seaway pipeline," IG Markets Singapore said in a

report, referring to the pipeline serving Gulf Coast refineries.

The Seaway pipeline has recently been troubled by distribution problems but plans to pump 295,000 barrels a day between late February and the end of May, media reports said.

Seaway is seen as a critical component in addressing a glut of oil at the bottlenecked US hub in Cushing, Oklahoma.

The pipeline's capacity was recently expanded to 400,000 barrels a day from 150,000 barrels, but the operator has encountered technical problems that have limited the volume.

Later on Wednesday, analysts will pore over the American Petroleum Institute's weekly supply report for clues on the health of oil demand in the world's biggest crude consuming nation.

The industry body's statistics are due one day later than normal due to Monday's public holiday in the United States.

Similarly, on Thursday the US government's Department of Energy will publish its weekly inventory figures one day later than usual.

Canada launches office of religious freedom

OTTAWA (AFP) - Canada's prime minister unveiled on Tuesday an office of religious freedom tasked with protecting and advocating on behalf of religious minorities under threat around the world.

Housed in Canada's foreign affairs ministry, the new office will oppose religious hatred and intolerance and promote pluralism "as a Canadian foreign policy priority," said a statement.

Thus it is expected to be "an important vehicle through which Canada can advance fundamental Canadian values including freedom, democracy, human rights and the rule of law worldwide."

At a Toronto-area Ahmadiyya mosque, Prime Minister Stephen Harper listed examples of Shia Muslims in Iraq, Coptic Christians in Egypt, Bahais in Iran, Ahmadis in Pakistan, and Chris-

tians and Falun Gong practitioners in China who faced "repression, imprisonment, and even death."

"Around the world, violations of religious freedom are widespread -- and they are increasing," Harper said.

"Throughout history and in our own day, governments that violate religious freedom are also prone to impose themselves in every other sphere of life," he added.

With a budget of five million dollars and five staff, the Office of Religious Freedom, according to a statement, will focus on advocacy, analysis, policy development and programming.

Its activities will be centred on countries and situations where there is evidence of "egregious violations" of the right to freedom of religion, including violence, hatred and systemic discrimination.

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 Sunday 5PM - 10PM
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Chile cult leaders jailed for pedophilia

SANTIAGO (AFP) - Four Germans and a Chilean have begun serving jail terms of up to 11 years for abusing children at a former secretive enclave of German settlers.

Four of them reported Tuesday to a courthouse in Parral, 340 kilometers (210 miles) south of Santiago, as ordered by a judge. The fifth had to be arrested and was taken to prison early Wednesday.

Late last month the Chilean Supreme Court upheld a 2004 verdict against these five former leaders of Colonia Dignidad, a cult-like community in southern Chile that was also used to hold political prisoners during the Pinochet dictatorship.

The top court found the five guilty of "rape of a minor under the age of 12 and 16 crimes of sexual abuse of minors, failure to turn over a minor and child abduction."

German nationals Gerhard Mucke and Gunter Schaffrik



Kurt Schnellenkamp

have begun serving 11 years in prison, and Ger Seewald a term of eight years. Seewald is the one who did not report to prison voluntarily on Tuesday.

Dennis Alvear, a Chilean, and German Kurt Schnellenkamp began five year terms.

In the original sentence a five year term was also handed down against Hartmut Hopp, a German who fled the country in 2011. Chile has sought Hopp's extradition, but Germany has rejected the request.

Hopp was considered the right hand man of Paul Schaefer, who founded the strictly governed community in 1961 and died in prison in 2010 at age 88 while serving a 20 year sentence for child abuse and torture.

Another 14 people have been convicted of covering up or being accomplices to the same crimes as the five jailed Tuesday and Wednesday and were sentenced to lesser prison terms.

Aruba's One And Only Department Store

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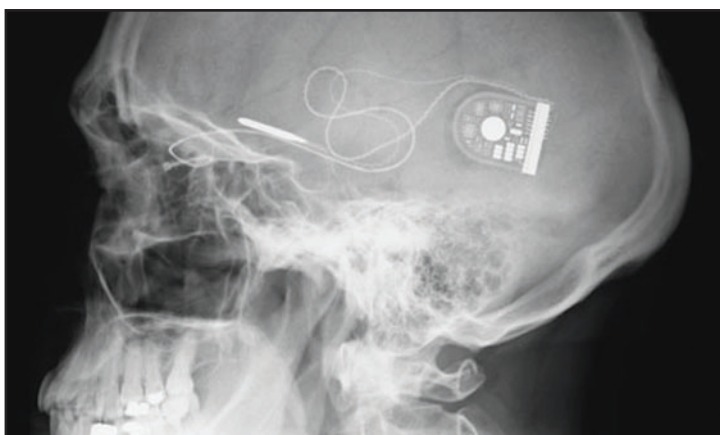
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Health & Living

Retinal implants clear new hurdle



PARIS (AFP) - German-designed implants aimed at restoring vision to patients blinded by retinal disease have succeeded in the second phase of trials, researchers reported.

The device was tested for up to nine months among nine people with retinitis pigmentosa, an inherited disease in which light receptors on the back of the eyeball degenerate and eventually cease to function.

"Of the nine patients observed in the study, three patients were able to read letters spontaneously," Retina Implant AG, a nine-year-old technology startup company that invented the device, said in a press release.

"During observation in and outside the laboratory, patients also reported the ability to

recognise faces, distinguish objects such as telephones and read signs on doors."

The device consists of a tiny light-sensitive chip measuring 3mm by 3mm (0.11 x 0.11 inches), which sends electrical signals down the optic nerve to the brain, providing a "diamond-shaped" black-and-white image with a field of 15 degrees.

Attached to the retina, the implant is powered via a thin cable which connects to a small coil fitted under a fold of skin behind the ear.

The coil is charged when a handheld battery unit is brought up close to it -- the same principle of wireless charging that is used, for instance, in electrical toothbrushes -- and thus means it can be used outdoors.

The battery unit also has two knobs, enabling the user to adjust the brightness and contrast of the image.

The patients received the implant in one eye, the one with the worst visual function.

One of the nine had to drop out of the experiment after the optic nerve was damaged during the implant operation, and another experienced a buildup in eyeball pressure which was successfully treated with drugs.

New drugs and revolutionary medical devices typically undergo a three-phase process of trials on human volunteers.

The number of patients and the scope of the test gradually widens, in a bid to ensure that the innovation is both safe and effective.

There are several other entrants in the field for retinal implants, reflecting big advances in electronic miniaturisation and microsurgery in the past decade.

None claims to be a cure but rather an aid to distinguish between light and darkness and ascertain the shape of objects.

Last week the US firm Second Sight Medical Products gained US regulatory approval in addition to the green light from Europe for its Argus II retinal prosthesis.

There is also a 24-electrode device made by Bionic Vision Australia, which has so far been tested on one patient.

China considers BBQ ban to combat smog: state media

BEIJING (AFP) - China is considering a ban on barbecues to help reduce air pollution in built-up areas after heavy smog recently choked large swathes of the country, state media reported Wednesday.

The country's environmental watchdog has issued draft guidelines advising major cities to adopt legislation banning "barbecue-related activities", official news agency Xinhua said, risking the ire of street food-loving locals.

The move comes after extreme pollution last month choked Beijing and large areas of northern China, prompting health fears and sparking an angry reaction from resi-

dents, many of whom donned face masks.

The pollution in the capital was blamed on emissions from coal-burning in power stations and exhaust fumes from vehicles on choked streets, with Beijing ordering the emergency closure of factories.

But Xinhua said the Ministry of Environmental Protection earlier this month issued draft guidelines that also branded barbecues part of the problem.

It cited an anonymous official as calling on the public to abstain from outdoor grilling in favour of a more environmentally-friendly way of life.

Belgium debates euthanasia for minors

BRUSSELS (AFP) - Belgian legislators opened a debate Wednesday on whether to amend a decade-old law on euthanasia to cover minors, being told by experts that it was already taking place in practice without any set guidelines.

Currently, the law applies to those over 18 but one expert told the upper house of parliament that it was clear that euthanasia was being carried out on younger people, the Belga news agency reported.

"We all know it," said Dominique Biarent, head of intensive care at Queen Fabiola Children's University Hospital in Brussels.

Faced with this reality, "doctors need a legal framework," Biarent was quoted as

saying by Belga.

Another expert, Professor Chris Van Geet of Leuven University, said the proposed changes pose "an enormous ethical problem."

The changes to the law, which would also include sufferers of Alzheimer's disease, were submitted to parliament in December and it is likely to be several months before any decision is taken on them.

Belgium was the second country in the world after the Netherlands to legalise euthanasia in 2002.

A total of 1,133 instances - mostly for terminal cancer - were recorded in 2011, about one percent of all deaths in the country, according to official figures.

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Sci-Tech

Entertainment memorabilia gets stage at Amazon.com



SAN FRANCISCO (AFP) - As this year's Academy Awards ceremony neared, Internet retail colossus Amazon.com launched an online shop stocked with film, music, and television show memorabilia.

The Entertainment Collectibles Store opened its virtual doors on Tuesday at amazon.com/entertainment-collectibles with more than 350,000 items that included outfits worn by Oscar winners and instruments played by Grammy stars.

A brimmed biker cap once worn by film legend James Dean was offered for \$25,000 while an outfit worn by actress Milla Jovovich in a "Resident Evil" film was priced at \$6,200.

There was a separate category devoted to memorabilia from "Star Wars" films, while

an original Argentine poster from the 1933 classic "King Kong" starring Fay Wray was listed for \$60,000.

An electric guitar signed by members of the Led Zeppelin rock band was priced just above \$15,000 and a similar sum was being sought for a guitar bearing signatures from the The Monkees.

And album covers, concert programs, posters, photographs, trading cards, props and more were offered at comparatively modest prices.

"There is something for everyone," Amazon Marketplace vice president Peter Faricy said of Entertainment Collectibles.

Also heading for the Collectibles shop are clothes worn in "Silver Linings Playbook," which is among the contenders at the Oscar ceremony on Sunday.

Photos show new activity at N.Korea nuclear site

WASHINGTON (AFP) - North Korea has resumed activity at a nuclear site following its internationally condemned bomb test.

Examining satellite photos, the US-Korea Institute at Johns Hopkins University detected a rise in traffic at the Punggye-ri site but cautioned that there was not enough evidence to assert that a new test was in the works.

The think tank said that there had been no sign of vehicles or people moving at the site for a day after North Korea carried out its third nuclear test on February 12 but that activity had resumed by February 15.

Writing on the institute's 38 North blog, analysts Jack Liu and Nick Hansen said the change over a few days may indicate that North Korea "took safety precautions to ensure radioactivity levels were sufficiently low before sending personnel back into the area."

North Korea is believed to have tightly sealed the site, making it difficult for the United States and other nations to detect from the air whether Pyongyang used uranium -- which would prove it has a second nuclear method in addition to its plutonium program.

Putin refuses to return disputed Jewish archive to US



MOSCOW (AFP) - Russia's President Vladimir Putin (C) visits the Jewish Museum and Tolerance Center in Moscow with the Chairman of the Federation of Russia's Jewish Organizations Alexander Boroda (R) and Russia's chief rabbi, Berel Lazar (L), attending. Putin said Tuesday he refused to return a historic but disputed Jewish archive to the United States because doing so would "open a Pandora's box". He spoke after a US judge slapped a daily fine of \$50,000 (37,500 euros) on Moscow last month for its failure to comply with a 2010 order to return the sacred texts. The archive -- referred to in Russia as the Schneersohn Library in honour of its original owner Rabbi Joseph Isaac Schneersohn -- was split up and partially nationalised by the Soviet Union in 1918. The other part was taken out of Russia and ended up in Germany where it was seized by Soviet troops at the end of World War II in 1945. Most of the 12,000 texts and 50,000 documents it contains have since been transferred to the Russian military archive and state library. Officials there said last month that they had no intention of parting with a collection gathered in the 18th century and regarded with veneration by Hasidic Jews who populated eastern Europe and have since largely settled in New York. The dispute has frozen cultural exchange programmes between the two old Cold War rivals and as a result, touring exhibitions of such great museums as the Hermitage and the Tretyakov have bypassed the United States.

COMICS

PICKLES



MOMMA



CALVIN and HOBBS



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PRATTLE ON ABOUT POEMS

ACROSS

1. Golf gadgets
5. Mass; Lat.
10. Housecoat
14. Every's partner
15. Certain exams
16. Hepburn had it
17. Flushing Meadows stadium
18. Bo of "10"
19. Do a seamstress's job
20. Frost poem, with 47 Across
23. Gardener's tool
24. Put a flame to the wick
25. Craftiest
28. John Masfield poem
33. Announcer Caray
34. Buttress
35. Novelist Levin
36. Toward the mouth
37. One way off a ship
38. Humorist Lebowitz
39. Be in a play
40. Empties the leaky rowboat
41. Minimal
42. "___ Land" (T.S. Eliot opus)
44. River rapids running between canyon walls
45. ___ Deco
46. Spanish border river
47. See 20 Across
55. Mascara's perch

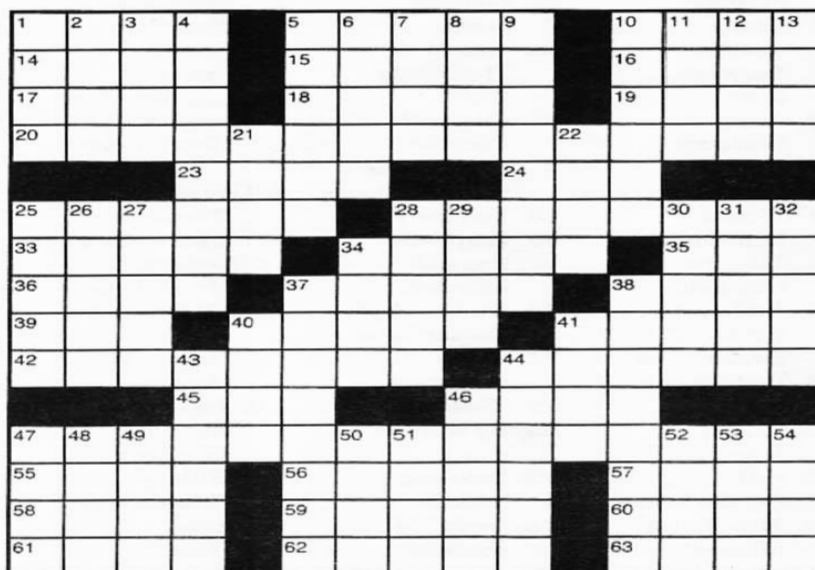
56. Lariat
57. Arrow poison
58. Major finale
59. Comedian Marty
60. Formerly
61. Fly sky-high
62. Eyes suggestively
63. Stiffens

DOWN

1. English Breakfast and Earl Grey
2. Bridge position
3. Canyon's answer
4. Figure often mentioned in 37 Down
5. Fashion follower
6. Papas of plays

7. Marionette-maker Tony
8. Arabic nomad
9. Shelley's "To ___"
10. Detached
11. Blue Bonnet, e.g.
12. Musical group
13. Wraps up
21. May Day gift
22. "I Love My ___"
25. Sty inhabitant
26. Conifer
27. All steamed up
28. Petroleum-bearing rock
29. Seeming eternities
30. Type of pneumonia
31. Clear
32. Scolds
34. Open an

- envelope
37. Poem about the country
38. Big-time crimes
40. Cow "condo"
41. Bowling locale
43. Clean machine
44. Sofas
46. Parking device
47. Bullfight bravos
48. Alliance acronym
49. "The Thin Man" terrier
50. Charm
51. Lock man Linus
52. About
53. Snug spot
54. Obtains



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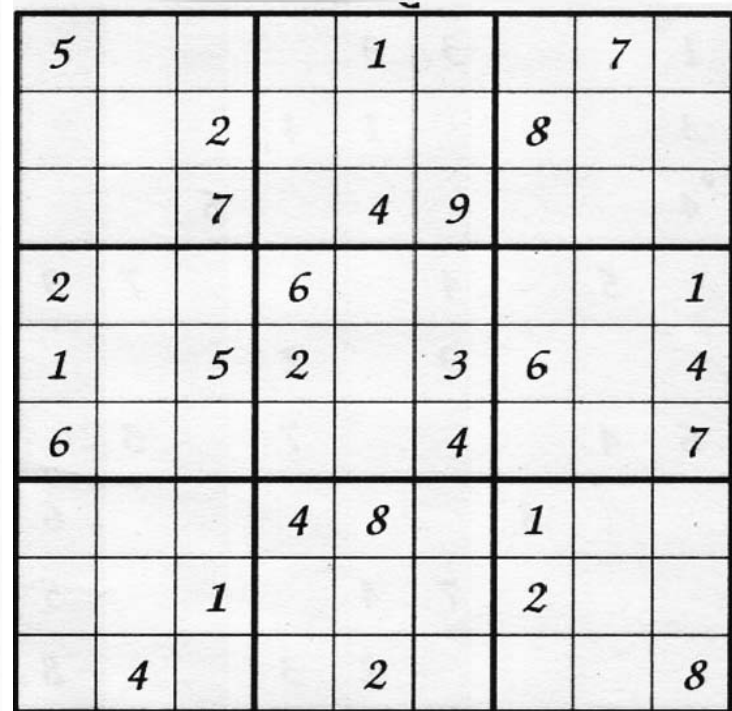
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Sudoku



SOLUTION

8	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8
9	7	6	5	4	3	2	1	8
5	6	1	9	8	7	6	5	4
2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	1
7	8	9	6	5	4	3	2	1
1	5	6	8	9	7	2	3	4
3	9	5	6	7	8	1	2	4
4	1	8	5	9	2	6	7	3
6	2	7	3	1	4	8	9	5

Complete the grid so that every row and every column contains the numbers 1 through 9
A number is Never repeated in a row or column.
In addition every rectangle must contain the numbers 1 through 9



Daily Exchange Rates

Current as of: 02/20/2013

	Currency Code	Buying rate banknotes	Buying Cheques	Selling Rate
U.S.A.	USD	1.77	1.78	1.80
Dutch Antilles	ANG	98.00	100.00	100.20
Canada	CAD	1.77	1.79	1.77
Britain	GBP	2.80	2.85	2.84
Switzerland	CHF	191.71	192.43	194.23
Netherlands	EUR	230.59	232.69	240.52
Sweden	SEK	25.91	26.63	28.78
Denmark	DKK	30.23	30.95	32.48
Norway	NOK	30.67	31.39	32.71
Japan	JPY	214.88	216.84	192.28

(per 10,000)

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Rich foreigners in Switzerland face tax hike

GENEVA (AFP) - Foreigners who move to Switzerland are set to face a tax hike from January 1, 2016, according to a Swiss tax authority timetable published Wednesday.

Currently, those on the rich list can opt to pay a lump sum to the local tax service, with their spending, rather than income, being used to gauge their wealth.

The new rules are set to expand what is considered taxable for the super-rich, and will apply in 2016 to anyone who moves to the country as of 2014.

Rich foreigners who already live in Switzerland will be allowed a grace period, up to 2020, before the new rules apply.

Around 5,000 people benefit from the current system, but it has raised hackles in Switzerland because it is only open to foreigners.

Last year, opponents of the existing rules launched a petition to demand that they be abolished outright.

Under Switzerland's renowned system of direct democracy, opponents managed to open the way for a referendum within the next two to three years.

A handful of Switzerland's 26 cantons -- the equivalent of US states -- have already decided to abolish their lump-sum rules outright or have toughened the criteria.

Swede Ingvar Kamprad -- founder of global furniture giant Ikea -- is one of the best-known beneficiaries of the lump-sum rules.

Kamprad was recently ranked by Swiss magazine Bilan as the richest man in Switzerland, with a net worth of up to 39 billion Swiss francs (32 billion euros, \$42 billion).

Ikea has insisted the sum mistakenly attributes to Kamprad personally the value of the unlisted, family-owned group, which has a complex ownership structure through several foundations.

Finance

US slaps sanctions on Colombian drug suspect

(AFP) - The United States announced sanctions Wednesday against a Colombian accused of shipping tons of cocaine to the United States and being linked to the FARC leftist guerrilla group.

The punishment against Jose Evaristo Linares Castillo freezes his assets in the United States and bars Americans from doing business with him. The measures were announced in a Treasury Department communique.

The suspect was arrested in Colombia last year and is awaiting extradition to the United States.

Linares Castillo was described as having led a drug ring that flew tons of cocaine, mainly from Venezuela, to Central America and Mexico where they are received by criminal gangs linked to the Sinaloa and Zetas drug cartel and sent further north the United States.

The department said the ring had links with the Revolutionary Armed Forces of Colombia, and in the past with other major Colombian drug kingpins.

New York Times puts Boston Globe up for sale

NEW YORK (AFP) - The New York Times, facing a difficult environment for newspapers in the digital age, announced Wednesday a plan to sell The Boston Globe and other New England assets. The Times said in a statement that it has hired Evercore Partners to advise the company and manage the sale process. The company aims to streamline its assets to promote its own marquee brand. "Our plan to sell the New England Media Group demonstrates our commitment to concentrate our strategic focus and investment on The New York Times brand and its journalism," said Mark Thompson, president and chief executive of The New York Times Company. Besides the Globe, the other assets up for sale are: Boston.com, The Worcester Telegram & Gazette, Telegram.com and GlobeDirect, the Globe's direct mail marketing company. Also included in the sale is the company's 49 percent interest in Metro Boston. "There can be no assurance that any transaction will take place," the company said in a statement.



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Office Depot, OfficeMax announce merger

NEW YORK (AFP) - Office Depot and OfficeMax announced Wednesday a merger to create an office-supplies retail giant better designed for an increasingly competitive retail landscape.

The companies described the agreement in a joint statement as a "merger of equals." OfficeMax shareholders will receive 2.69 Office Depot shares for each share of their common stock.

Based on Tuesday's closing price of Office Depot, the deal values OfficeMax at \$1.17 billion (\$13.50 per share). Office Depot on Wednesday had a market capitalization of \$1.2 billion.

The merger comes as both companies face growing competitive pressure not only from peers like Staples, but from Internet stores like Amazon and big-box retailers, including Wal-Mart and Target.

"In the past decade, with the growth of the Internet, our industry has changed dramatically," Office Depot chief executive Neil Austrian said.

"Combining our two companies will enhance our ability to serve customers around the world, offer new opportunities for our employees, make us a more attractive partner to our vendors and increase shareholder value."

Each company will have an equal number of members on the board of directors of the combined company, which would have had \$18 billion in revenues at the end of last year.

The companies said the merger would result in \$400-\$600 million in annual cost synergies. Other benefits include greater cash firepower. The combined company would have more than \$1 billion in cash on hand and more than \$1 billion through available credit facilities.

Office Depot has 1,929 stores in 59 countries and employs around 38,000 people.

OfficeMax has more than 900 stores and 29,000 employees.

Bank of America Merrill Lynch predicted in a note that the merger would result in "a significant acceleration in store closures going forward."

But even with the closures, capacity remains a concern "given the increasing commoditization of office products and growing irrelevancy of the office-specific retail format," it said.

The new company's leadership will be determined by a selection committee made up of an equal number of independent board members from each company. The incumbent chief executives, as well as external candidates, will be considered, the statement said.

The combined company's name, marketing brands and corporate headquarters location is expected to be determined after the CEO is appointed, it said.

Office Depot shares were 14.5 percent lower in midday trade in New York, while OfficeMax shares fell 4.3 percent.

Wednesday's official announcement of the merger was preceded by a number of US media reports before the markets opened that said a \$1.2 billion deal had been struck. However, the reports appeared to have been based on an Office Depot news release that was later removed from the company's website.

Office Depot posted a net loss of \$17.5 million, or six cents per share, compared with year-ago profit of \$12.3 million.

OfficeMax reported a net loss of \$33.9 million, or 39 cents per share, compared with \$2.9 million profit in the 2011 fourth quarter.

YESTERDAY'S Crossword Answer



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Vatican News:



VATICAN CITY (AFP) - Pope Benedict XVI may issue a decree that would bring forward the conclave tasked with electing his successor before a date in mid-March scheduled under the current rules, the Vatican said Wednesday.

"The pope is considering a Motu Proprio (decree) in the coming days... to clarify a few specific aspects of the apostolic constitution on the conclave," spokesman Federico Lombardi said.

Historian Ambrogio Piazzoni said "the pope is the only one who can legislate until the last minute", when he steps down on February 28 at 1900 GMT.

The Apostolic Constitution promulgated by Benedict's predecessor, the late pope John Paul II, in 1996 states that the conclave must begin between 15 and 20 days following the start of the popeless "Sede Vacante" ("Vacant Seat") interregnum.

The delay is normally for cardinals to have time to travel to Rome following the death of a pope.

But in this case many of the cardinals are already in Rome to bid farewell to the outgoing pontiff.

The conclave is expected to bring together the world's 117 "cardinal electors" and meets in secret in the Sistine Chapel until a two-thirds majority is found in favour of a candidate to be the pope.

Bringing forward the date of the start of the conclave would help prevent any overlap with Easter, which this year falls on March 31.

Meanwhile, US Cardinal Roger Ma-

hony, retired from church duties as part of a paedophilia scandal, cannot be banned from the conclave to elect a new pope, but could be advised to stay away, a fellow cardinal and canon law expert said in an interview.

Mahony, the former archbishop of Los Angeles, was relieved of all church administrative and public duties last month for mishandling and covering up abuse claims against dozens of priests, dating back to the 1980s.

An association of US Catholics, Catholics United, has launched a petition to keep him from taking part in next month's conclave to elect a successor to Benedict XVI.

While in Rome the goldsmith who crafted the "Fisherman's Ring" worn by Pope Benedict XVI said he hoped his work would not be destroyed once the pontiff steps down as is customary in Catholic tradition.

Benedict was the first pope since the 19th century to commission a "Fisherman's Ring" - his predecessor John Paul II wore a simple gold ring with a cross -- and he has worn the chunky gold ring at all his major public appearances.

The ring is so called because it depicts Saint Peter, who was a fisherman by trade, pulling up his net from a boat. The one worn by the current pontiff carries the inscription "Benedictus XVI" -- the pope's official title in Latin.

Benedict referred to it at his first mass as pope in which he was handed the papal pallium -- a type of vestment -- and the ring. He spoke of the Gospel story of Jesus Christ telling his future disciples that he would make them "fishers of men".

Franchi said the ring was placed on St Peter's tomb before the pope first put it on.

The ring has an elliptical shape -- an artistic representation of St Peter's Square, the famous Vatican plaza designed by Gian Lorenzo Bernini in the 17th century.

It has been kissed by world leaders as well as the masses of ordinary Catholics who have met with the pope during his eight-year pontificate, which is coming to an abrupt end on February 28.

Vatican spokesman Federico Lombardi said at a briefing last week that the ring would probably be "terminated" in private in the days after the resignation.

The ring contains 1.23 ounces (35 grams) of gold.

Fishermen's Rings once played a critical role in the running of the Church as signet rings used by popes to put their official wax seals on documents.

They were removed from the hand of a dead pope by the Cardinal Camerlengo, the prelate who takes over before a new pope is elected, and destroyed with a hammer so no fake documents could be drawn up in the pope's name.

Others were completely scratched and melted so that they would no longer be valid.

Few of the rings have therefore survived the centuries and Franchi said the only one on in the Vatican Museums belongs to the "antipope" Clement VII who was elected in 1378 by French cardinals opposed to Urban VI in Rome.

The ring "is a symbol of this pontificate," said Franchi, a fan of Benedict who studied art history and comes from a family of goldsmiths.

Michael Jackson's son gets TV showbiz job



LOS ANGELES (AFP) - The late King of Pop's eldest child, "Prince" Michael Jackson, has started work as a television showbiz reporter, the show employing him announced Tuesday. The 16-year-old landed the job -- or the show's producers landed him -- for Entertainment Tonight, starting by interviewing stars of an upcoming remake of "The Wonderful Wizard of Oz." ET correspondent Brooke Anderson, who gave the younger Jackson some on-screen tips on interview technique, said he seems so much wiser and older than 16. "That's what most of my people say. That was all thanks to my dad. He raised me right," said the teenager. He said he now wants to interview "The Lord of the Rings" and "The Hobbit" director Peter Jackson.

Man arrested in New York Dali heist

NEW YORK (AFP) - US authorities said Tuesday they have arrested a Greek man for making off with a Salvador Dali watercolor and ink painting worth about \$150,000 from a New York private art gallery in June. Phivos Istavrioglou, 29, was arrested Saturday



at JFK international airport in a sting that lured him to the United States from Italy, Manhattan District Attorney Cyrus Vance announced. Famously mustachioed Spanish surrealist painter Salvador Dali's 1949 "Cartel de Don Juan Tenorio" was on display as part of the Venus Over Manhattan gallery's debut exhibition, which opened in May. Surveillance video showed the suspect, wearing a black and white shirt and jeans, casually walking out of the Upper East Side art gallery with the painting sticking out of a shopping bag.

Taj Mahal Restaurant in Oranjestad is an authentic culinary excursion



--When Bharat Shah, originally from India, but now a successful businessman in California, put on a spectacular wedding in Aruba for his daughter Lisa and her groom Kalpesh, they welcomed hundreds of friends and relatives from around the world, including the "old country."

When all the wedding

guests had finally arrived in Aruba, Bharat hosted an official welcome party along the shore in Palm Beach, and he chose to have it catered by Taj Mahal restaurant, he was that impressed by their cuisine.

If you like your Indian food authentic, or are looking for a new and unique dining experience, an evening at Taj Mahal will deliver a memorable meal. A seemingly endless menu offers scores of choices for fish, chicken, lamb and vegetarian dishes that are "the real deal;" discover that Indian food goes way beyond curry!

A taste-testing crew from THE MORNING NEWS chose a selection of their singular starters and two main courses with saffron rice,

served family style, which provided a fine example of the versatility of their chef.

Taj Mahal's Tai Choice is a great way to start the meal and be initiated into the joys of Indian cuisine, offering a diverse selection of traditional favorites. It contains hearty portions of Pakoras, crispy vegetarian fritters, Aloo Tikki, potato cutlets, Chicken Tikka, tender chicken breast pieces seasoned just right, and shaped and seasoned ground lamb, charmingly dubbed "Sheik Kebabs." All is served on a bed of sliced onions and brought to your table on a sizzling platter, and you will want to dish those sautéed onions on to one of their tasty Indian breads called Naan, leaving behind not a single crumb. Main dishes are accompanied by a choice of rice, mixed vegetables rich with garlic, or Naan, plain, buttered, onion or garlic, and you will want to order an extra basket or two of this tasty delight, on which you can spoon your

main course, as well. Poori is crispy fried naan, and most definitely worth the extra two dollars to sample with your meal.

Our group also added an appetizer of crunchy Samosas, the Indian form of a potato knish, served with either cilantro or sweet and sour sauce. A platter of their Jhinga, large, crispy-fried shrimp in a delicate batter is ample enough to serve as a main course, though featured on their appetizer menu.

As we mentioned, main courses are served family style, in beautiful little pots that sit upon a candle to keep them warm. Our group sampled the "Mutton Saagwala," also known as "Lamb Shag" which is cooked in a thick sauce of yogurt and spinach, and the "Fish Hara Masala," moist, tender chunks of fish in a rich sauce featuring cilantro as the main flavoring. This is offered in mild, medium and very spicy, we found the medium quite spicy enough for us; it left

a tingle on the tongue.

The family style service allows everyone at the table to sample a bit of this and that, and we heartily recommend you do, to truly appreciate this authentic bit of India in Aruba. Open for lunch and dinner, Taj Mahal sports a cozy and intimate air-conditioned dining room and a small outdoor terrace for those that enjoy dining al fresco. They have an exotic dessert menu to match, but our group was too stuffed to partake; there was even enough left to box up and provide a lunch next day for the lucky first person to get to it!

Located behind the Royal Plaza Mall, Taj Mahal offers a dining experience that is truly out of the ordinary; they feature an excellent and tasty selection for vegetarians too. If you are a fan of Indian food, or have been toying with trying it, Taj Mahal is the place for a very affordable dining experience and the real deal! **Call 588-4494 for reservations.**

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Latest 'Die Hard' tops N. America holiday box office



LOS ANGELES (AFP) - The latest in the long-running "Die Hard" action series, with Bruce Willis reprising his starring role, topped the holiday weekend box office across North America, industry data showed Tuesday.

Twenty-five years after the first film about tough New York cop John McClane, the new one, "A Good Day to Die Hard," hauled in \$24.8 million, or \$28.6 million including Monday's Presidents Day, said tracker Exhibitor Relations.

The fifth installment of the "Die Hard" movie series has Willis's McClane travel to

Russia to help an adult son get out of trouble.

The comedy "Identity Thief" continued to defy tepid reviews and came in second place with \$23.7 million in ticket sales (\$27.5 million with the extra day), after debuting last week at the top of the box office.

In third place was romantic drama "Safe Haven" by Sweden's Lasse Hallstrom, which made \$21.4 million or \$24.5 million over the long weekend, followed by animated "Escape from Planet Earth," which sold \$15.9 million, or \$21.1 million with Monday.

"Warm Bodies," a romantic

zombie comedy inspired by Shakespeare's "Romeo and Juliet," was in fifth spot with \$8.9 million (\$10.6 million over four days).

The debut of "Beautiful Creatures," a supernatural fantasy flick featuring British Oscar-winner Emma Thompson, came in sixth with \$7.6 million (\$8.9 million) in ticket sales.

In seventh was director Steven Soderbergh's thriller "Side Effects," starring Jude Law and Rooney Mara, with \$6.3 million, or \$7.3 million including Monday.

Oscar-nominated romantic comedy "Silver Linings Playbook," starring Bradley Cooper and Jennifer Lawrence, was eighth with \$6.2 million (\$7.4 million) in ticket sales.

In ninth spot was "Hansel and Gretel: Witch Hunt," a horror movie twist on the classic fairy tale, which grossed an estimated \$3.5 million, or \$4.2 million over four days.

Rounding off the top ten was Osama bin Laden man-hunt movie "Zero Dark Thirty," also nominated for next weekend's Academy Awards, which sold \$3 million in tickets, or \$3.6 million including Monday.

Sport

Champions League



AC Milan's french defender Philippe Mexes (R) and AC Milan's midfielder and captain Massimo Ambrosini fight for the ball with Barcelona's Argentinian forward Lionel Messi (C)

MILAN (AFP) - MILAN, Feb 20, 2013 (AFP) - Ghanaians Kevin-Prince Boateng and Sulley Muntari both scored in a lively second half as AC Milan inflicted a shock 2-0 defeat on Barcelona in their Champions League last 16, first leg, at the San Siro here Wednesday.

Milan, crowned European champions seven times, had failed to beat the Catalan giants in the competition since a 2-0 win at the Camp Nou in 2000 and had exited the competition last season and in 2006 after defeats at the hands of Barcelona.

But, after a promising first-half display was taken up a level in the second period, fans of the Rossoneri were given reason to believe that their team can advance to the quarter-finals.

The return leg is at the Nou Camp on March 12.

Arena, US midfielder Jermaine Jones equalised on the stroke of half-time to give Schalke a slim advantage ahead of the March 12 second leg.

Schalke have now lost just one of their last ten European away fixtures, including victories at Olympiakos and Arsenal, in sharp contrast to their recent Bundesliga form.

After just one victory in their last 12 games, this was a huge improvement by the Royal Blues.

Despite Drogba and Sneijder making their Champions League debuts for the ambitious Turkish club since joining last month from Shanghai Shenhua and Inter Milan respectively, both had quiet



AC Milan's Ghanaian defender Prince Kevin Boateng celebrates scoring



Schalke 04 midfielder Marco Hoger (R) shoots the ball in front of Galatasaray's midfielder Felipe Melo (L)

And in Istanbul, Schalke 04 brushed off poor recent form to earn a 1-1 draw at Galatasaray in the Champions League last 16, first-leg clash on Wednesday despite the hosts fielding Didier Drogba and Wesley Sneijder.

After Turkey striker Burak Yilmaz gave Galatasaray an early lead at the Turk Telekom

games as the hosts failed to dominate.

With Borussia Dortmund having earned a 2-2 draw at Donetsk and after Bayern Munich's impressive 3-1 win at Arsenal on Tuesday, all three Bundesliga clubs now have a strong chance of making the quarter-finals.



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Copa Libertadores



TOLUCA (AFP) - Antonio Rios (L) of Toluca from Mexico vies for the ball with Christian Nunez (R) of Nacional from Uruguay during their Copa Libertadores tournament, Nacional won 3-2 from Toluca.

Cycling: Armstrong refuses to cooperate with USADA

WASHINGTON (AFP) - Lance Armstrong said Wednesday that he will not cooperate with the US Anti-Doping Agency's investigation into doping cheats in cycling but would be willing to help other anti-doping inquiries.

The move greatly diminishes Armstrong's chances of having his life ban from World Anti-Doping Agency-sanctioned sport reduced even as it forces USADA to move ahead without his help in looking into others involved in doping.

"Lance is willing to cooperate fully and has been very clear: He will be the first man through the door, and once inside will answer every ques-

tion, at an international tribunal formed to comprehensively address pro cycling, an almost exclusively European sport," said a statement released through attorney Tim Herman.

"We remain hopeful that an international effort will be mounted, and we will do everything we can to facilitate that result.

"In the meantime, for several reasons, Lance will not participate in USADA's efforts to selectively conduct American prosecutions that only demonize selected individuals while failing to address the 95 percent of the sport over which USADA has no jurisdiction."

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Tennis: Kvitova eyes revenge match with Radwanska



DUBAI (AFP) - Petra Kvitova, the former Wimbledon champion from the Czech Republic, continued her exciting return to form here on Wednesday with a performance which edged her nearer the tenth title of her career.

Kvitova's brilliantly masked hitting eased her into

the quarter-finals of the \$2,000,000 Dubai Open with a 7-5, 7-6 (7/1) win over Ana Ivanovic, the former French Open champion from Serbia.

It sets her up with a last eight match against Agnieszka Radwanska, the defending champion, and who she has painful memories of as the Pole beat her in the end of year Istanbul tournament last year.

Kvitova's match was full of

fine ground strokes between two players who are gradually regaining some of their former excellence after fitness problems.

Both players title hopes were boosted after the withdrawal of world number one Serena Williams earlier on Wednesday with a back injury. This followed Monday's withdrawal of top-seeded Victoria Azarenka with a heel injury.

Another reason for Kvitova's fine form, which saw her lead Williams 4-1 in the final set in Doha last week, is the improvement in her physical fitness compared with last year.

Another who might capitalise on the absence of the top two is Caroline Wozniacki, the former world number one from Denmark who won the title here two years ago.

Golf: Snow halts WGC Match Play before top seeds tee off



MARANA (AFP) - Snow halted the opening round of the World Golf Championships Match Play Championship on Wednesday before top seeds Tiger Woods and Rory McIlroy could tee off and before any matchup was completed.

Play was set to resume on Thursday with Spain's Sergio Garcia the nearest to victory, leading Thailand's Thongchai Jaidee 2-up and looking at a 12-foot birdie putt at the 15th hole while Thongchai is 96 feet from the cup.

Only 10 of the 64 first-round matches had not teed off when the snowstorm struck at

Dove Mountain near Tucson, but those matches included World No. 1 McIlroy of Northern Ireland going against Irishman Steve Lowry.

Woods, who was set to open against US compatriot and friend Charlie Howell, and England's Luke Donald, a top seed set to face German Marcel Siem, also were awaiting their starts when the storm struck to stop play for the day.

Ireland's Padraig Harrington, a three-time major champion, and Northern Ireland's Graeme McDowell were still on the first hole when play was halted.

NBA: Johnson shines ... continued from page 16

This was Williams first game back after missing two straight with an ankle injury. He has been one of the Nets top scorers this season, averaging 16.7 points per game heading into Tuesday's contest.

Brook Lopez also had 19 points and nine rebounds for Brooklyn, who are 12-11 in the first game after the mid-season break dating back to the 1989-90 season.

Lopez is fresh off his performance in the all-star game where he had three points and five rebounds in just over 10 minutes of playing time.

Brandon Jennings had a

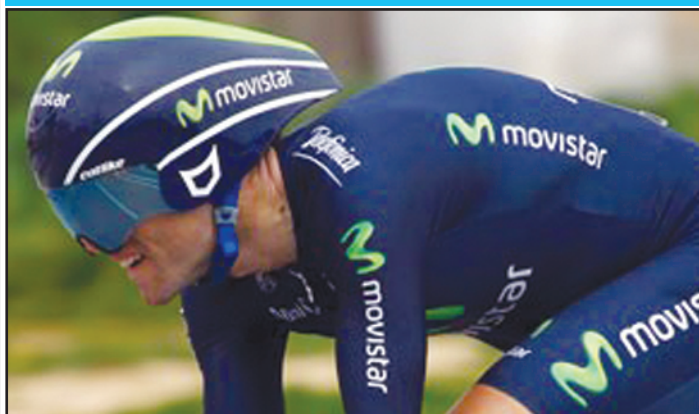
game-high 34 points and Ersan Ilyasova contributed 21 points and nine rebounds for Milwaukee, who lost their fifth in six contests.

Larry Sanders returned after missing four games and finished with 14 points, eight rebounds and six blocks in the loss. Sanders has at least one blocked shot in his last 34 games.

The Bucks suffered their first loss to the Nets since March of 2009. Milwaukee hosts the Nets at the Bradley Center arena on Wednesday.

The Nets improved to 20-10 at home this season.

Cycling: Valverde claims Andalucia title



MADRID (AFP) - Alejandro Valverde claimed overall victory in the Vuelta a Andalucia after also sealing his second stage win on the final day of the four-stage tour Wednesday. The 2009 Vuelta de Espana champion continued his strong start to the season having also won a stage at the Mallorca Challenge a fortnight ago and led the standings from start to finish after claiming victory in the prologue on day one. The Movistar rider was joined on the podium at the end of the 183km Lucena to Rincon de la Victoria stage by Slovenian Simon Spilak in second and Italian Davide Rebellin in third.

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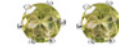
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NHL: 'Hawks beat Canucks to equal NHL record



CHICAGO (AFP) - The Chicago Blackhawks matched an NHL record start to a season on Tuesday, beating the Vancouver Canucks 4-3 to post their 16th consecutive game where they earned at least one point.

Chicago is now 13-0-3 this season and have tied the 2006-07 Anaheim Ducks' record of points from consecutive games.

The Blackhawks host the San Jose Sharks on Friday where they will have an opportunity to beat the record.

Chicago's Andrew Shaw beat Vancouver goaltender Cory Schneider with a nifty high backhand shot in the third round of the shootout.

Canucks forward Ryan Kesler was the next shooter and had a chance to extend the shootout, but Blackhawks goaltender Ray Emery made a glove save to give them the victory.

"I guess you can get some pretty ones once in a while," Shaw said. "I heard my name and I was nervous. But I won't forget this."

Slovakia's Marian Hossa had two goals while Canadian Patrick Sharp also scored for the Blackhawks, who have

now won three straight.

There was disappointment for the Blackhawks however when star forward Hossa was injured in the third period, after taking a forearm to the head from Vancouver's Jannik Hansen, and had to leave the game.

Hossa, who has a history of concussions, will be checked by team doctors on Wednesday.

Sweden's Daniel Sedin, Kevin Bieksa and Alexander Edler scored singles for the Canucks, who have lost their last three contests.

Chicago led 3-1 with three minutes left in the third period. But Edler and Bieksa both scored on slapshots to tie the game with one minute left in the period and force the overtime.

Sedin scored his goal in the first period from a backhand.

The Blackhawks beat the Los Angeles Kings 3-2 on Sunday to improve to 12-0-3, matching the 1984-85 Edmonton Oilers for the second-longest point streak to open a season. Both the Oilers and the 2006-07 Ducks went on to win the Stanley Cup in those seasons.

NBA: Johnson shines as Nets edge Bucks in OT



Monta Ellis #11 of the Milwaukee Bucks takes the ball down court

Brooklyn (AFP) - Guard Joe Johnson hit the game-winner at the buzzer in overtime to lift

the Brooklyn Nets to a 113-111 victory over the Milwaukee Bucks on Tuesday.

Johnson carried the Nets on his back down the stretch at the Barclays Center arena by nailing a three-point shot near the end of regulation to send the game into overtime.

He shot 10-of-18 from the field and finished with 24 points for Brooklyn who snapped a 13-game losing streak to the Bucks.

Point guard Deron Williams had 19 points with nine assists as the Nets emerged from the National Basketball Association all-star break to earn their third-straight win.

Andray Blatche and CJ Watson came off the bench to score 14 and 11 points respectively for the Nets in front of a crowd of 17,334.

continues on page 15



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